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CHINA

China's Millions

BY

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"CHINA'S MILLIONS."

YOU have heard of them. You must continue to hear of them. They are forcing themselves on the world's attention.

They came into the great plans of God. Until they are converted, the world will not be converted. When they turn to the Lord, then it will no longer be any great goddess Diana, but it will be Jesus the Anointed, whom "all Asia and the world worshippeth."

But great numbers in one concrete statement are vague. Let us take them in detail. The population of China has been set down at 400,000,000. A late statement, based on partial returns, puts it at 382,000,000. Some people are frightened at that; so we will take the old official census of 1812, which made it 360,000,000.

It was a solemn sight, and grandly impressive, when the armies of the Lord in the wilderness took up their line of march. No such review had ever been held, and none such has ever been held since. A nation of six millions on the march from one country to another, by the way of the Red Sea, the wilderness of Paran, and the river Jordan. What a pageant was that which passed before Moses, field marshal of the living God!

We speak of battalions and brigades going forth.

Among them it was said, they went forth according to their armies, — banners flying at the head of each army, and the clarion notes of silver trumpets guiding the steps of the consecrated hosts. There were twelve tribes of them. First of all came Judah with his standard aloft; then the host of Issachar; then another standard, and the host of Zebulon, and so on till the vast cavalcade had filed along. No wonder these sights and scenes entered into poetry and song, and gave rise to such expressions as "terrible as an army with banners."

In our days, though in a small way, kings and captains general are fond of imitating these ancient reviews. We had one such in our own land at Washington after the war, when, before the commander-in-chief and the assembled heads of the nation, with drums beating and colors flying, there marched along army corps and army columns of the great republic.

Nobody that saw it will ever forget it. We will borrow the design for a missionary use. Let us make the different provinces of China pass in review before us, one at a time, each with its vast army of living men, women, and children. That will be better than giving a lump number. You will get a more detailed impression.

As each province passes, the population roster can be given; you can lump them afterwards. Get ready your tents; make them good and strong, able to endure pelting storms and changes of season, for it is no holiday work you now enter upon when you sit down to review the procession of Chinese as they go forth according to their armies and according to their provinces.

Twelve hours a day is long marching, but we must keep them going at that rate. You will need

your sleep, and time for rest, for even a review may become wearisome, so the other twelve hours will be for yourselves. We must keep them going Sundays as well, for this is only a hypothetical march, and if it is more than a Sabbath-day's journey for business, it is only such a Sabbath-day's journey as they are all taking to eternity, and you along with them. Besides, on the Sabbaths you can think differently from what you can on other days.

You can think of all these persons living and dying without Christ, without a Sabbath here, or a hope of a Sabbath hereafter. And you can think of the great commission and of Him who gave it, and how long since He gave it, and of how many Chinese have lived and died since He gave it, and many other Sunday thoughts can come into your heads on that day.

Soldiers marching in "close order" will take about two and a half feet to each man, but so much time will be required that we must put them closer than that, and save every inch we can and every minute of time. So we will expect them to march in "lock step" and allow only a foot and a half to each person. In one mile there are 5,280 feet. At lock step there will be 3,520 persons to each mile. Each million of them will stretch along for a distance, say of 284 miles.

Twenty miles a day is good work for a column on the march. We will reckon at that, — it is fast enough for a column moving on to judgment, — and so each million will require fourteen days in passing.

And now all is ready. When shall the column form and the review begin? Let us have a fine day to start with, even though wintry ones should

be ahead. We will pitch on the first day of June, with the whole of an all glorious summer before us.

1 CHIHLI, which means "direct rule." It is the capital province of the empire, and is about the size of the State of Illinois. Population, 27,990,871. They will reach 7,952 miles nearly. The line will stretch from the steps of the Capitol at Washington, across the continent, and far away into the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and will require 397 days in passing.

You see you are in for it. You thought you would sit it out on that line if it took all summer. But summer comes and summer goes, and there you are still. Lay in a stock of coal, for winter will be upon you before a quarter of them have gone by. Autumn passes, winter passes, spring passes, and you are well into the heat of a second summer before you have seen the last of that column, and that is only one column.

2 SHANTUNG, "East of the hills." Here comes the banner of the second province. Population, 28,958,764, near enough to twenty-nine millions to call it that. They will reach 8,230 miles, and will take 411 days to pass. The previous division left you in July of the second year; this one will keep on moving till August of the third year. Your tents will be mildewed and rotted by the rain; better build yourself a house, and lath and plaster it, for there are years before you yet. Your second winter will be upon you soon. Is it not solemn to look upon them as they move? And how many army chaplains ought to be furnished to meet the needs of such a host? If it were an army of the United States there would be a chaplain to every thousand men, a thousand chaplains to each million, and twenty-nine thousand for them all. Of

course we could not and would not send any such number as that; but then, we scarcely send anybody. I do not know how it is just at this writing, but a little while ago there was not one preacher to a million.

SHANSI, "West of the hills." This is an inland province, much less thickly settled. It is smaller than Illinois, but it has 14,004,210 people. They will not occupy you so long.

They will reach 3,980 miles, and will be only 199 days in passing. In all these ages, since Christ ascended, nobody has taken them the gospel. Recently, those Cambridge men went there, C. T. Studd, Stanley Smith, Montague Beauchamp, and others. Away off in those mountain regions, the Lord has worked with them with signs and wonders following. In the month of April of the past year, there were 215 baptisms; yet ten years ago, it was not known that a man of the whole fourteen millions had ever heard of Christ. Woe unto you, Cambridge and Oxford! for in the day of judgment, the men of Shansi shall rise up and condemn you, for some of them repented under the first sermon they heard, while many under the shadow of your old cloistered walls have heard a thousand sermons, and are not so near the kingdom of God as when you first began.

HONAN, "South of the river," contains 23,037,171 people. Their column will be 6,534 miles long, and will require 326 days to pass along. For forty-six Sundays, one after another, you can think of them, and hear missionary chapters in the Bible read about them, with the missionary application left out.

The promises made to the whole earth are localized to one's own church or association. There

they go,—without hope and without God in the world, and without any one to teach them,—and yet, in the United States, we have 80,000 ministers of evangelical denominations, multitudes of whom are doing nothing but just listening to other people preach.

KIANGSU. Population, 37,843,501—enough to stock an empire of itself. Japan is an empire, yet it has not so many people as that one province. Great Britain is an empire; France has called itself an empire; Germany is an empire yet, but the population of none of them is much larger.

The Kiangsu part of the procession will reach 10,750 miles, and will require in passing 537 days. Such numbers are appalling! While they are filing along by the million, seventy-seven Sabbaths will pass over your heads. You will need a chaplain of your own to preach to you who review the procession. During all these days he can preach to you a whole body of theology upon all manner of subjects except your duty to save the perishing. Twice during that time will "Merrie Christmas" come and go; twice will you sing Christmas carols, and hear about the birth of Him who was given to save all mankind. Twice will you eat your Christmas dinner, and send around among your friends your costly presents of superfluous albums, and yet forget to send a little frankincense and myrrh to those breadless, starving hosts whom Christ in vision committed to your trust.

NGANHWUI. Here is another one nearly as large. Other great countries are groups of states and districts; China is a group of empires. It is a great empire, made up of smaller empires. The population of this province is 34,168,054.

This line will extend 9,706 miles, and will take

up 483 days of your time. Ah, but those empires do not make so much stir in the world as do our small States! Yes, just now; but before a half-century has rolled away, these minor empires will be heard from. They have been in the torpor of a winter, millenniums long, but the ice age is passing by; they have been in the Nigban of Buddhism, but the mists of Buddhism are slowly lifting, while at the same time they are beginning to settle down in the theosophic circles of Boston and London.

You may not introduce Buddhistic ritualism in your cultured society, but you will surely feel the chill of Buddhistic teaching. The darkness of Egypt has been upon this people for ages, while for ages you have been basking in the sunshine of Christianity, which has been shining steadily upon you ever since those early centuries, when foreign missionaries from Rome took the gospel to your Druid fathers, howling and dancing around a human sacrifice.

Give the gospel a chance to thaw them out for just one century, and see what they will be, and how they will gain on the nations of the West.

KIANGSI, "West of the river." Population, 23,047,999, making a line 6,547 miles long, and requiring 327 days to pass along. They keep up their solemn, silent, and yet awfully voiceful tread. Whither are they bound? Do they know anything at all about God as a Saviour? Have they heard of Him who was set forth to be a propitiation for the sins of the world? When John said those words through the Holy Ghost, had he in mind the whole world, or did he refer chiefly to the United States? Why are the preachers of

the cross massed in such solid phalanx in the United States, and so few over here?

Why is it that these multitudes of Kiangsi are left to themselves? "No man careth for my soul," may be the refrain of them all. Nobody except a dozen men and women of the China Inland Mission.

CHEHKIANG. Once more, enough to set up one of the "great powers" of Europe; 26,256,784 people in a line, reaching back 7,454 miles, and taking up in passing 372 days of your precious business hours. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Is it my duty to give these hosts the gospel, even in small measure? In the legacy of Christ, He gave us the riches of glory, and at the same time he laid on us a responsibility which is a part of the will. He gave us a goodly land; one as fair as the sun ever shone upon. He was ages and ages in getting it ready, in covering its surface with a rich soil, in cleaving it with rivers of water, in underlaying it with mines of the richest ores, and then handed it over to our fathers. What for? That we might settle down in idleness and luxurious living; or in order that we might do good, as well as enjoy it ourselves? We are enjoying it. Our splendid mansions are built, our costly and cushioned churches are lifted heavenward, even when we are not; but the other feature of the will, which refers to "all the world," we set aside, saying, "We have enough to do at home."

FUHKIEN, "Happily established." This is a hilly region, and the population is not so large; yet there are 14,777,410 people, forming a line 4,198 miles long, and taking up 209 days in passing. What the people lack in quantity, they make up in quality. This, and some of the provinces that

follow, contain the most vigorous population of China. They have the raw material for the highest forms of national greatness.

Warriors, statesmen, scholars, and prosperous merchants are continually rising up among them. Young brethren in the ministry, when you left the seminary, your friends told you that men of *your* talents are needed at home, and that somebody of less ability will do to go abroad. Now and then a man has succumbed to this delicate flattery and has been sent to fill some "important city church." Once there he has found himself elbowed right and left, and with no greater field of usefulness than some of these discarded places present. Men of your talents are needed at home, but so too are they needed here, where, if you come, you will find yourself laying foundations for a whole denomination to build upon. Tell me if it is not a worthy field for your abilities, where you help mould the coming faith of coming millions.

HUPEH comes next, — another great nation in itself, — 27,370,098 strong, stretching far away, the head and foot of the line 7,775 miles apart, and consuming more than a solid year in the march. "Ah, yes, but one good American like Dr. Blank is worth a hundred Mongolians; better to catch one large trout than a dozen minnows." My brother, who taught you to say that?

"Cometh this persuasion of Him that calleth you?" Who are the trout and who are the minnows before God? But for the gospel, where would all your learned doctors be to-day?

I grant that there is such a thing as strategy in evangelizing, and shall hope some day to speak of it. Even the New Testament exhibits it, but you never hear the apostle saying that one Jew is worth

a hundred Syrophenicians. But this is wearisome and heart sickening. The heathen are long and the time drags heavily. Would that the display were over. It is a terrible sight; will it never end? Yes, we can hasten.

Yonder comes the yellow imperial banner of HUNAN, "South of the lake." Following it is a file of 18,652,507 human beings who have never heard of Christ. They reach back 5,296 miles more. O Lord, deliver us from indolence and selfishness!

KWANGTUNG next,— Kwangtung, that knows so much about the opium traffic and the coolie trade, with its 19,174,030, and extending the line 5,444 miles farther. O Lord, open the eyes of the ministers in our pulpits, and of all teachers in our colleges and seminaries, to the claims of Christ upon them to preach and teach a missionary gospel!

KWANGSI, YUNNAN, and KWEICHOW, three of them the smallest of them all. We will put them together, for you are tired, and so am I, of this interminable march. All told, they have only about 18,000,000 between them, taking up over 5,000 miles more. O Lord, forgive us for our indifference!

SUCHUEN, one of the great provinces, with 24,435,078 people, making a line over 6,000 miles long. O Lord, move on the hearts of young men to give themselves at once to this work! Make them willing to go forth and preach Christ among the heathen. Make them willing to go without waiting to be driven.

SHENSI, with 10,207,256, and a line reaching over 2,000 miles. O Lord, loosen the money bags of the people! Make them to send forth their rusted coin to help save the nations.

"How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

KANSUH. It is nearly over. Here is the last column, 15,193,125 strong, and reaching over 4,000 miles farther. What a pageant! but it has been the pageantry of death. O Lord, have compassion upon the multitudes, for they have nothing to eat! O Lord, in our own land there is bread and to spare, but it comes not hither! Bless the barley loaves of thy servants, and make them feed at least a few of these provinces.

This procession has been over one hundred thousand miles long, and it has occupied more than thirteen years in passing.

While they have been on this move one third as many more have been born into the world to follow after.

O Lord of the harvest, awake a slumbering church and a lethargic ministry out of this torpor of death!

SWATOW, January, 1888.